DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 457 385 CE 082 428

TITLE	Employer Intermediaries: A Briefing Paper [and Profiles].
INSTITUTION	Jobs for the Future, Boston, MA.; Chamber of Commerce of the United States, Washington, DC.; National Association of Manufacturers, Washington, DC.
SPONS AGENCY	Ford Foundation, New York, NY.
PUB DATE	1998-05-00
NOTE	30p.; Briefing paper and case studies prepared for the "The Employer Workforce Development Initiative: Partnering with Communities to Create a Workforce for the New Millennium" Planning Conference (May 18-19, 1998).
AVAILABLE FROM	For full text of Briefing Paper: http://www.jff.org/pdfs%20and%20downloads/brief_paper.pdf. For full text of the Case Studies: http://www.jff.org/pdfs%20and%20downloads/case_studies.pdf.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Case Studies; Community Colleges; Decision Making; Definitions; Delivery Systems; Economic Change; Education Work Relationship; Employers; Employment Practices; Employment Services; Financial Support; Job Placement; *Labor Force Development; Labor Market; Labor Needs; *Labor Turnover; *Linking Agents; Nonprofit Organizations; *Organizational Development; *Organizational Effectiveness; Organizational Objectives; Organizations (Groups); Outreach Programs; Partnerships in Education; Planning; Private Sector; Professional Associations; Public Sector; *Recruitment; School Business Relationship; Strategic Planning; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS	Employer Role; *Intermediaries; Private Industry Councils

ABSTRACT

In the late 1990s, many employers were facing short-term and longer-term human resource challenges. Those challenges have prompted many employers to pursue new strategies for finding and retaining qualified employers. Intermediary organizations have emerged as a valuable resource for helping employers find and keep qualified workers. Whatever their institutional form and whether they are in the private, public, or nonprofit sector, employer intermediaries perform one of or more of the following general functions: (1) organizing and representing employers (they can bring employers together to aggregate and represent their interests in work force developing planning and policy); (2) brokering (they can serve as a broker between employers and local players in work force development, including educational institutions, social service agencies, and community-based organizations); and (3) delivering services (they can deliver services directly to employers and their work force, often serving a particular target population). Nine employer intermediaries performing one or more of these functions have been identified and profiled. The following are among the six challenges and opportunities that emerged from the profiles: targeting priority clients among segments of the employer community; conducting effective outreach to other employer and community institutions; matching organizational capacity to proposed activities; and gearing funding strategies to the long haul. (MN)

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ED 457 385

Employer Intermediaries: A Briefing Paper

Prepared for the Planning Conference

The Employer Workforce Development Initiative:
Partnering with Communities to Create a
Workforce for the New Millennium

May 1998

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INTRODUCTION

This spring, Jobs for the Future, the National Association of Manufacturers, and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, with support from the Ford Foundation, are launching "The Employer Workforce Development Initiative." The initiative will examine and enhance the role of employer associations as intermediaries that can (1) assist employers in meeting their workforce needs through creative new strategies; and (2) help disadvantaged individuals secure better access to high-skill, well-paid employment. The primary activities will be provision of funding and technical assistance to selected members and affiliates of the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce that are working to build their capacity as employer intermediary organizations.

This briefing paper, prepared for the project's Planning Conference on May 18-19, 1998, has three parts:

- **Part I** discusses the ways in which the new economy creates labor market and workforce development challenges and opportunities that local intermediary organizations, including employer-initiated intermediaries, have begun to address.
- **Part II** outlines three major functions intermediary organizations can play to make it easier for employers to find and keep qualified workers. These functions are: *organizing and representing* employers; *brokering services* and referring employers to vendors for recruitment, training, support services, and other workforce needs; and *delivering* such services directly.
- **Part III** presents key challenges and decision points for employer intermediaries as they decide how they will help local employers meet their workforce development needs.

PART I

A Growing Challenge: Finding Qualified Workers

The U.S. economy is in the midst of its strongest sustained performance in decades. Unemployment is at a low 4.7 percent, and inflation is in check at under 3 percent. Productivity is making a comeback in some industries, while soaring stock prices reflect consumer and employer confidence.

However, in this strong economy, employers face very real challenges as they try to expand, become more efficient, and compete in a demanding global and national economy. The combination of low unemployment and a shrinking labor supply places great strain on employers that rely on traditional strategies for finding—and keeping—qualified labor.

Employers identify this short-term recruitment challenge as among their most pressing problems. In a recent National Association of Manufacturers-Grant Thornton survey, 88 percent of manufacturers reported a shortage of qualified workers in at least one job category, a shortage that has become progressively more severe since a similar 1991 survey.

The difficulty many firms are having finding qualified workers in a tight labor market brings into stark relief longer-term human resource challenges that will persist even when the economy cools:

The public system for matching workers with jobs and improving labor market functioning is inefficient and inadequate. It is plagued by insufficiently detailed labor market information and the reluctance of many employers to participate actively. Moreover, it lacks both adequate resources for its task and a sustained commitment to incumbent workers. For the most part, workforce development policy targets modest resources to a small subset of the population, the hard-to-employ, providing them with limited services, such as assistance with job searches and short-term training.

Public and private sector job-matching mechanisms are under even more strain than normal in today's volatile, unstable job market. To contain costs and become more competitive, employers have sought to increase their flexibility in hiring and deploying employees. In the process, they have weakened or avoided traditional internal labor markets, instead relying more on contingent workers at the low end and on looking outside the firm for higher-skilled workers. These trends have, in turn, contributed to greater "churning" within the labor market, illustrated by more frequent job searching and job changing among individuals. In addition, many employers are moving toward more team-oriented, flexible forms of production, where the employee "fit" is increasingly important to productivity. In this new employment environment, effective matching is increasingly important, and the inefficiencies of current mechanisms for finding (or creating) qualified workers for available jobs are of increasing concern to employers.

Employers' steadily rising skill expectations for entry-level workers further highlight the shortcomings of existing job-matching systems. Even as the pool of available workers shrinks, employers seek higher academic and social/communications skills from their entry-level workers. Although some jobs will always require little ability to read, write, or solve problems, these opportunities are already rare. This trend, though uneven, is further complicating the task of finding qualified workers for current and future jobs.

Employers have other good reasons to adopt creative alternatives to current strategies for securing workers. For example:

- Improving the job-matching process can dramatically increase a firm's productivity. It can reduce turnover and the need for intensive supervision, while making team-building more effective. The longer workers stay with a firm, the more likely they are to receive on-the-job training, increasing their value, and often their loyalty, to the company.
- Employers as a group may be able to avoid political backlash by taking more proactive steps. Income inequality has risen alongside extended prosperity and low rates of unemployment. Significant segments of the population are not benefiting from these good times, while the population in general remains anxious about long-term security, with some anger directed at corporate America. Addressing this situation could prevent a backlash that would increase labor market regulation and reverse favorable trends in tax and fiscal policy.

The combination of short and longer term challenges and opportunities has prompted many employers to pursue new strategies for finding and retaining qualified employees. One strategy would increase the *supply and quality of available workers.* This "supply-side" strategy focuses on improving the education and training opportunities for incumbent workers and new labor market entrants.

At the same time, innovative employers are seeking to improve the *matching function* itself, through more effective communications about labor market information, creative labor recruitment, and more productive ways to assess and screen job applicants. In today's tight labor market, new strategies for locating non-traditional sources of potential employees are also emerging.

Some employers are also exploring ways to *alter their own corporate policies and practices in ways that make their job openings more attractive to different populations.* For example, while resisting wage increases, some employers are testing a range of post-employment supports, including mentoring, transportation and child-care assistance, along with other work-family benefits to retain workers.

Further, evidence is mounting that employers are becoming more aggressive and creative in their pursuit of qualified workers, looking for new strategies to tap three distinct populations: *incumbent employees* (e.g., the traditional workforce); *youth* (e.g., through school-to-career initiatives); and *"transitional" workers* (e.g., through welfare-to-work programs).

For example:

- Recent surveys of employer participation in school-to-work initiatives have shown that remarkably high numbers of employers—in the vicinity of 25 percent—provide young people with access to their workplaces as a way to improve career exposure and readiness.
- According to a National Association of Manufacturers survey, manufacturing employers are spending more on training for incumbent workers, up to 2 percent of revenues from under 1 percent in previous surveys.
- Temporary help/staffing firms comprise one of the nation's fastest growing industries. While employers continue to use this approach to maintain a flexible workforce, they increasingly are using it as a way to find, screen, and test the "fit" of new recruits with available jobs.
- Federal and state governments have succeeded in enlisting a host of large and small employers in welfare-to-work initiatives designed to increase the hiring of welfare recipients into paid jobs.

In all these efforts, a growing number of employers are collaborating with peers in their industry or sub-

sector to aggregate workforce interests and strengthen their voice in relevant policy debates.

Intermediaries: Helping Employers Address Changing Needs

As individual employers strive to improve the match between people and jobs, while also improving the overall quality of the skill base, they are finding that *new strategies require a new infrastructure* to assist them—particularly for small and mid-size firms. Such an infrastructure could provide employers with a collective forum through which to ensure that employment and training services align with labor market needs. It could promote efficient collaboration between the public and private sectors. And it could lower the costs to individual firms of communicating and coordinating with diverse service providers.

Increasingly, both employers and advocates for individuals in need of better employment are looking to a range of *intermediary organizations* to serve employer interests in the labor market. Such organizations can help improve the connections: (1) between groups of employers and job seekers; (2) between employers and local education, training, and service providers; and (3) between employers and the public-sector agencies responsible for workforce and economic development.

A broad and diverse array of institutions is exploring ways to meet new employer needs. These institutions include:

- *Temporary help firms* that wish to expand their market and profitability;
- *Community colleges* interested in increasing their customer base and serving both local residents and employers;
- *Community-based organizations* that want to improve the economic well-being and job prospects of particular constituencies;
- *Labor unions* that have decided that serving members includes participating in issues of labor supply and quality as well as bargaining over wages and working conditions; and
- *Publicly funded agencies*, such as one-stop career centers and private industry councils, that are trying to fill up-to-date workforce preparation missions.

Employer associations are an increasingly important player in this arena. Historically, employer associations at the local or regional level have focused primarily on collective benefits (e.g., group insurance) and lobbying on behalf of members. In recent years, however, organizations representing employers have begun to emerge as intermediaries, aggregating and serving their members around pressing workforce issues.

One trend in employer associations is toward forming *networks of firms in the same industry* or *cluster.* These firms organize to increase the flow of information among themselves, improve their relations with local educational and public-sector institutions, and bundle their common workforce and production interests so that they can benefit from economies of scale in negotiations with vendors. These networks may originate as production networks, driven by a desire to identify and fill higher-value-added niches in the marketplace. Yet many find that attention to workforce development needs grows directly from the mission of these "bottom-line" collaborations.

A second trend in employer associations is the move into workforce development activities by *local chapters of national employer organizations*, such as the Chamber of Commerce and the National Association of Manufacturers, extending their roles beyond traditional services. It is this trend that is the focus of this brief and The Employer Workforce Development Initiative.

PART II

The Functions of Employer Intermediaries

Whatever their institutional form, whether in the private, public, or nonprofit sector, existing intermediaries perform one or more of three general functions:

- *Organizing and Representing Employers:* Within an industry, sector, or region, intermediaries can bring employers together to aggregate and represent their interests in workforce development planning and policy. By leading or participating in advisory groups, planning bodies, and other organized partnerships, intermediaries help employers define and advocate for programs and services that meet collective goals.
- *Brokering:* Intermediaries can serve as a broker between employers and local players in workforce development, including educational institutions that provide employment and training services, social service agencies that provide support services to workers, and community-based organizations that have access to local residents in need of employment.
- *Delivering Services:* Intermediaries can deliver services directly to employers and their workforce, rather than acting as a broker that connects and refers employers to other providers. These intermediaries may enter into such arrangements as part of a mission to serve a particular target population.

Of course, every intermediary tailors its goals and activities to local economic and political realities. An intermediary organization created and sustained by local employers—what we term an *employer intermediary*—must decide where its priorities lie and assess its organizational capacity to engage in some or all of the options described in this brief.

To assist this decision-making process, the examples that follow illustrate the strategies of a variety of intermediaries, both employer intermediaries and others, in organizing employer interests, serving as brokers, and delivering direct services.

Organizing and Representing Employer Interests

Organizing and representing employers to collectively define, articulate, and advocate for their interests is probably employer intermediaries' most typical role. Within an industry or across a local labor market, employers frequently find it to their advantage to collaborate on issues of workforce policy and economic development planning in ways that can improve their ability to find qualified employees. Employer intermediaries can *create an agenda for collaboration across firms and industries on workforce issues, promote this agenda among employers and other local interests, and represent employer interests in multi-stakeholder planning and policy partnerships and arenas to further workforce development goals employers have identified.*

In this convening role, employer intermediaries can, for example:

- identify priorities for joint action;
- bring together firms in a particular industry to identify standards for use in local education and training programs;
- recruit high-profile employers to develop support for a local school-to-career initiative;
- negotiate with a regional transportation authority to modify local bus routes so that former welfare recipients can commute to jobs;
- participate in regional Workforce Development Boards as formal representatives of employers; or
- provide relief from the administrative burdens and added risks of participating in public/private efforts to introduce young people or welfare recipients to workplaces.

See profiles:

- *Center for Employment Training*
- *The Management Association of Illinois*
- *Philadelphia School-to-Career Leadership Council and the Education for Employment Office*

Brokering

Across the nation, employers are seeking help as economic realities force them to find new sources of workers and explore ways to improve the skills of their existing workforce. Employer intermediaries can facilitate this process, particularly for small and mid-sized firms, by (1) providing information and advice on workforce strategies; and (2) linking employers, individually and in groups, with local institutions and organizations that can help them address their needs.

Intermediaries can simplify the challenge for individual employers by developing efficient and effective relationships with high schools and colleges, training providers, community-based organizations, personnel firms, and other institutions. Intermediaries, particularly those that give priority to one or a few industry sectors, are able to structure and sustain a rich, detailed exchange of information about employer needs and provider capacity. Even more important, intermediary organizations can help employers and service providers adapt to one another in ways that significantly improve the match between employer needs and provider responses.

As brokers, employer intermediaries can assist firms as they try to find and keep high-quality entry-level and higher-skilled workers. In this role, intermediaries can help employers find effective ways to obtain or provide:

- Intensive work-readiness training for welfare recipients entering the labor force as a result of welfare reform;
- On-site, post-placement supports and training for employees who need English as a Second Language and adult basic education courses, customized to improve performance in specific jobs;
- Consultation or advice on determining the educational and skill levels of lower-level incumbent workers and how these skills might be upgraded to meet employers' changing needs; and
- Support for workplace mentoring and work experiences for students participating in local school-to-career or other youth initiatives.

As the workforce-related challenges facing employers increase, along with the pressure to reach out to new and different populations as sources for qualified workers, the brokering function of intermediaries can take on especially significant value. Whether through helping employers identify a need for specific services, negotiating for collective provision of services, or supporting employers as they tackle new roles vis-à-vis their workforce, an intermediary organization can reduce individual employer costs and risks, identify resources, press for higher quality and more responsive services, and drive the implementation of effective workforce development policies and practices in the community.

See profiles:

- *Boston Private Industry Council*
- *Partnership for a Smarter Workforce*
- *Seattle Jobs Initiative*

Direct Services

While some intermediaries feel that their primary role is to be an effective, proactive broker among employers and between employers and other workforce-related institutions and service providers, others have identified gaps that they choose to fill by directly providing needed training, education, job matching, or social services. Instead of looking for the most effective ways for others to respond to specific employer needs, some intermediaries have chosen to become service providers themselves, designing programs addressing pre-employment job readiness needs or post-employment supports, for example.

An intermediary typically makes this choice based on a strategic assessment of its own capacity and that of the workforce-related infrastructure in which it is one player. It is an important choice for any organization, with significant implications for staffing, expenditures and revenues, corporate culture, and positioning within the community infrastructure.

See profiles:

- *Macomb Community College*
  Center for Training and Employer Services
- *Twin Cities Rise!*
- *Tulsa Industrial Exchange, Inc.*

PART III

Implementation Challenges and Opportunities

Only recently have some employer associations, at the local or regional level, begun to assume the intermediary roles described in this brief. Yet helping employers in an industry or region understand and act on workforce needs collectively presents employer associations with a powerful opportunity to add value for their members and their communities.

The experience of existing intermediaries suggests several key implementation challenges and opportunities:

- ***Targeting priority clients among segment(s) of the employer community.***

The employer base in a community is diverse. A first challenge is to determine how to target the intermediary's employer outreach and activities. An association such as a National Association of Manufacturers chapter will, of course, serve the local manufacturing base. But lead industries within manufacturing may express greater need or be more ready to collaborate toward common goals. Will the intermediary focus on the needs of one or more sectors that are important to the local economy? Or is the goal to serve all comers in a geographical region? A carefully-designed process for deciding on target employers would be inclusive, and would yield a consensus on priorities.

- ***Conducting effective outreach to other employer and community institutions and partners.***

Every community has its own long-standing and complex interrelationships among organizations, institutions, and individuals. The decision to create a new organization or significantly expand the coordinating and convening functions of one that already exists will affect the local institutional "ecology." For this reason, outreach to other organizations that represent employers in the community, provide workforce-related services (e.g., education and training, social services, transportation), and form the core of the community's civic infrastructure must be done systematically and strategically. Sorting out existing institutions and relationships and clearly identifying gaps in the workforce system can enable an intermediary to avoid unnecessary conflict and minimize duplication of services.

An intermediary that brings existing parties together to promote their common interests and change local policies, practices, and politics must be strategic in building a base of political support and buy-in. Seeking input and support *early* in the planning process from potential allies and potential "competitors" is important. So, too, is ensuring that the people who are "brought to the table" through this outreach process have the authority and position to speak for their institutions and constituencies.

- ***Deciding on goals and priority activities that yield maximum benefits to employers.***

Employers tend to think in the short-term about potential gains and problems to be solved. Yet workforce challenges are both short-term and long-term, and an intermediary organization will have to pursue an agenda that balances short- and long-term goals. If goals and priorities are too distant, many employers will be skeptical of the value and hesitant to participate. If priorities and activities focus too much on a short-term hiring crisis, the intermediary will be unable to help employers look ahead and plan for lasting solutions to workforce challenges.

It is always a challenge to get individual employers to join these efforts and sustain their involvement. It is easier if the priority activities have a high value to the core membership. The importance of careful assessments of employer needs cannot be underestimated. Organizations sometimes assume they know what employers need and want, without undertaking a thorough and open planning and design process. This can seriously weaken employer buy-in.

- ***Matching organizational capacity to proposed activities.***

As emphasized above, intermediary organizations have to decide the extent to which they will act as brokers among local employers and workforce-related institutions versus providing direct services to individual employers. Will they create and deliver their own training or seek to make training provided by community colleges and other institutions more responsive to employer needs? Will they operate a reverse commuting program or work closely with a community-based organization that wants to do so?

One determinant of the response will be the intermediary's staff capacity and its plan for growth. Direct service is staff-intensive and expensive, but it can also generate revenue. Early on, and throughout its life, the intermediary's staff and board will have to make thoughtful decisions about moving into direct service.

An added factor in such decisions will be the strengths and weaknesses of existing workforce-related institutions. The stronger the infrastructure of education and training providers, community-based organizations, and social service agencies, and the more effectively they collaborate in relevant areas, the less likely that employers will want their intermediaries to compete. The more gaps in the capacity of others to deliver needed services, however, the more difficult the decisions become for the intermediary.

- ***Gearing funding strategies to the long haul.***

Employer intermediaries entering or expanding activities in the workforce development arena face funding challenges that involve both private and public resources. Workforce intermediaries have access to an array of public-sector resources, and there is frequently competition for these funds among a range of community service providers. Part of the convening role an intermediary can play is helping to shape an integrated planning and budgeting process that will support necessary functions served by a range of local players. Intermediaries need to sort through the range of resources that can contribute to their viability over the long-term, from general membership fees, to fee-for-service activities, to public sector and foundation grants.

- ***Benchmarking progress to ensure that intermediary initiatives undertaken will lead toward the desired results.***

Determining how to evaluate both short-term and long-term impact is a challenge for all intermediaries, which track indicators ranging from job placement rates, to credentials awarded, to postsecondary completion rates and long-term retention in an employment track. Building the consensus of employer members and other partners in a workforce initiative around a framework that identifies the most important implementation and outcome measures to track helps provide a common focus to steer collective efforts toward common goals and gather information useful to making mid-course corrections. The process of agreeing on common benchmarks, while often complicated and time-consuming, is almost always a worthwhile investment.

Center for Employment Training

Mission

Based on a philosophy of self-determination, the Center for Employment Training (CET) seeks to promote the human development and education of low-income people by providing then with marketable vocational educational training and support services that contribute to economic self-sufficiency.

Highlighted Function

Convening and organizing employers

Strategy

CET engages employers in governing and designing its programs to ensure that it provides program participants with skills that lead to employment.

Structure/Design

CET illustrates the importance of organizing employers to clearly articulate their needs and to participate in helping training suppliers meet specific labor market needs. Each CET site is supported by two employer-driven advisory structures. It establishes Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) for each skill set offered at the CET site. In addition, an Industrial Advisory Board (IAB) of local employers advises the CET on overall program strategy and development. The IAB and TACs for each site exist side-by-side but meet separately to provide CET with specialized advice and guidance.

TACs advise CET on developing the curriculum necessary for each skill, developing local labor market surveys, identifying training equipment needs, and interviewing the CET instructor who will teach the relevant courses. Each TAC has about eight members who represent the major employers within that particular industry and who can hire CET graduates. TACs usually meet twice a year and review and revise curriculum as needed.

The IAB represents the core of local employers. It meets periodically with CET staff to receive updates on the center's training performance, review listings of students who are ready to be placed in a job, and share information about current job openings. A major, local employer chairs each IAB, with a CET representative as co-chair. IABs meet monthly, quarterly, or biannually, depending on the needs of the specific site.

Participants

TAC and IAB members represent the major employers within a community that are in the position to hire CET graduates. TAC representatives are usually human resources personnel or a person with expertise in a particular skill. The IAB is usually composed of the CEOs or human resources directors of participating firms.

Program Summary

CET strives to involve employers in the development of a site's training programs from the very beginning. Prior to offering skills training in a community, CET joins the local Chamber of Commerce as a business and conducts a labor

continued

Center for Employment Training *continued*

Program Summary *continued*

market survey with the help of the Chamber, local economic development agencies, and local employers. CET communicates extensively with local employers and economic development agencies to determine the job openings in the community and the skills CET can provide to fill those jobs. CET presents the skills training it can offer to local employers and invites these employers to join CET's local Technical Advisory Committee.

After establishing a training program, CET asks TAC members to join the sites' Industrial Advisory Board, sending a different person to the IAB than serves on the TAC. Over time, the IAB advises CET on industry trends and the selection of new skill offerings, conducts mock interviews with job ready students, assists students with interview techniques, provides employment referrals, and conducts job market surveys and research.

Staffing

The average CET site typically employs a staff of 10, including the Center Director. Both TAC and IAB members participate on a volunteer basis, usually donating a few hours of time per month. Participating employers often benefit from tax incentives as a result of work with CET.

Funding

Funding for overall CET activities at each site comes from nationally and locally obtained Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) funds (over 60 percent), other forms of federal assistance (25 percent), and public and private vocational rehabilitation agencies, welfare programs, foundations, and other sources. Funding for TAC and IAB activities is determined by each local site and usually involves a combination of volunteer time and in-kind contributions.

Measures of Success/ Outcomes

CET measures the success of TACs and IABs by the extent to which participating firms hire CET graduates. CET is one of the few federally funded job training programs that has demonstrated success in improving the employment and earnings prospects of disadvantaged individuals. One rigorous evaluation found impressive earnings gains for graduates, including an unprecedented $6,000 earnings gain in the third and fourth years after program participation, more than 40 percent higher than the gains for their control counterparts.

In 1992, the U.S. Department of Labor contracted with CET to replicate its training model throughout the nation, and by 1996, sixteen new CET model centers had been opened in eight states. Since 1967, the CET program has trained and placed over 70,000 people in jobs. About one-third of these graduates were formerly on welfare.

The Management Association of Illinois

Mission

The Management Association of Illinois provides human resources, labor/employee relations, compensation, training, and organizational development services. It delivers reliable information and cost-effective services resulting in positive employee relations and growth for member organizations. It considers the formation of strategic alliances a critical element of achieving its mission.

Highlighted Function

Convening and organizing employers

Strategy

The Management Association of Illinois organizes employers to meet community workforce and economic development needs.

Structure/Design

The Management Association recently convened employer involvement in workforce development issues in DuPage County through two projects. First, it cosponsored "Futures Summit/Future Search" for the DuPage County Workforce Development Board. This summit brought together 80 representatives from various stakeholder groups (government, education, business, and parents) to address challenges in workforce learning, education, and training. The summit met for three days to create and map out a more effective, integrated, and better communicated model for preparing and developing the DuPage County workforce.

With the Illinois Manufacturers Association and Bridges Communities, a community-based organization, the Management Association cosponsored a seminar on welfare-to-work. The seminar highlighted the experiences of four Management Association members involved in projects with the DuPage County Welfare-to-Work Program. The firms' CEOs discussed their experience and explained to state legislators and other government officials what employers expect from participants in welfare-to-work programs.

Participants

The Management Association works with city, county, and state officials, other business groups, labor, school officials, and community-based organizations to address workforce development issues.

Program Summary

As cosponsor of "Futures Summit/Future Search," the association played an integral part in identifying facilitators and corporate sponsors, facilitating a subgroup on technology, and crafting a vision statement. The association also used its relationship with the National Association of Manufacturers to identify best practices from other parts of the country.

The association members that are part of the DuPage Welfare-to-Work Program have established a partnership with Bridges Communities to provide 60 residents with ongoing job skills training and personal support to enable them to

continued

The Management Association of Illinois *continued*

Program Summary *continued*	obtain jobs. The Management Association solicits resources to support these efforts and disseminates lessons learned to association members and business groups.
Staffing	The Futures Summit/Future Search project required about 10 hours per month from the association's executive director to attend committee meetings and do follow-up work. The association volunteered this time. Support for the Welfare-to-Work Program included highlighting it in the association newsletter, identifying tax benefits available to participating companies, soliciting input from association members, tracking the partnership as a national model, and connecting participating firms to other partnerships and available resources.
Funding	The DuPage County Welfare-to-Work Program has a grant of $250,000 from the Illinois Department of Economic Development.
Measures of Success/ Outcomes	Although the DuPage County Welfare-to-Work Program has had some difficulty in recruiting candidates, the program hopes to provide at least 60 county residents with ongoing job skills training and personal support to enable them to leave public assistance and obtain jobs. The Futures Summit/Future Search project has resulted in a workforce development vision statement, increased sharing of information among stakeholders, and the publication of electronic and print directories of resources on welfare-to-work and workforce development. Both efforts created relationships in DuPage County that have helped key stakeholders understand the connections of welfare-to-work to workforce development. They have also helped all stakeholders involved understand the complexity of funding streams involved in implementation.

Philadelphia School-to-Career Leadership Council and the Education for Employment Office

Mission

In the early 1990s, the Philadelphia School District established the Education for Employment (EfE) Office to improve the city's comprehensive high schools, particularly their vocational programs. To support the implementation of school-to-career as a key component of systemic education reform, the EfE has established a Leadership Council, Local Resource Boards, and Stakeholder Partnerships.

Highlighted Function

Convening and organizing employers

Strategy

The EfE fosters partnerships among schools, employers, and other community allies to improve the educational and career opportunities of young people while ensuring that the skills of the workforce match the needs of Philadelphia employers.

Structure/Design

The EfE convenes and organizes employers in school-to-career efforts through a three-pronged structure: the School-to-Career Leadership Council, Local Resource Boards, and Stakeholder Partnerships.

The Leadership Council, a broad oversight group, guides, shapes, and oversees school-to-career policies and programs. It generates employer involvement in school reform, promotes public understanding and acceptance of reform, and generates resources to carry reforms forward.

Local Resource Boards, now in formation, increase the capacity of the local community to provide programs and services to ensure that young people succeed in school and are prepared for work or further education. Each board will have a corporate lead partner responsible for its overall coordination.

Stakeholder Partnerships link industry areas with the school-to-career system by serving as advisory councils. Executives from specific industries work with the School District to ensure that instruction and training align with employer needs and standards.

Participants

The Leadership Council is comprised of corporate, community, government, labor, and educational leaders. Its chair, the former CEO of CoreStates (the region's largest bank) is also the current president of the Philadelphia Private Industry Council. Each Local Resource Board will have representatives from business, government, postsecondary education, labor, community-based organizations, and the school district, as well as school personnel, students, and parents. Stakeholders Partnerships include representatives from business, labor, industry, and postsecondary education.

Program Summary

The EfE recruits and supports school-to-career employers. It has played a central role in the evolution of the city's comprehensive school reforms and oversees

continued

Philadelphia School-to-Career Leadership Council and the Education for Employment Office *continued*

Program Summary *continued*

the School-to-Career Employment Services Unit, which recruits businesses to provide work-based learning opportunities.

The Leadership Council advances the goals and objectives of Philadelphia's School-to-Career Workplan. Its principal goal is to recruit lead corporate partners for Local Resource Boards.

Stakeholder Partnerships will work with the "small learning communities" being established in Philadelphia's schools, advising on curricula and organizing sector employers to offer work-based learning experiences and other supports for school reform.

Staffing

The Leadership Council has 22 members, with its meetings and activities staffed by the EfE. The EfE also oversees the Employment Services Unit, whose six business relationship managers and 15 placement specialists connect schools and employers around work-based learning opportunities. The EfE plans to move this unit to permanent housing in a new school-to-career intermediary to be formed in an existing employer organization.

Funding

The EfE's convening activities are funded by School District funds budgeted for school-to-career and by grants from private foundations and federal and state governments. Leadership Council, Resource Board, and Stakeholder Partnership members contribute their time.

Measures of Success/ Outcomes

The EfE and the Philadelphia School District measure progress on school-to-career activities by tracking a variety of performance indicators, such as:

- The number of employers providing specified levels of work-based learning experiences to students and teachers;
- Student enrollment in and completion of postsecondary educational programs and employment in high skill jobs;
- The percentage of students in designated schools who are participating in an intensive school-to-career program; and
- Work-based learning students' academic progress on a range of measures (e.g., grades, graduation rates, test scores, and student portfolios).

Boston Private Industry Council

Mission

The Boston Private Industry Council (PIC) connects the youth and adults of Boston with careers in the mainstream economy. A partnership of business, government, education, labor, and community leaders, it focuses on education, training, and employment.

Highlighted Function

Brokering services to employers

Strategy

The PIC connects young people and adults to employers that can offer employment and opportunities for work-site learning, and it also provides intermediary services to sustain those connections.

Structure/Design

The PIC is a 35-member council, with representatives from the private sector, organized labor, education, and government. The council elects an 11-member decision-making body, representative of these stakeholders.

The PIC was the primary convenor of the Boston Compact in 1982, a landmark agreement committing business, community, and political leaders and the public schools to improving education and connecting youth to jobs. Since 1982, implementation of the Compact's school-to-career and employment goals has rested primarily with the PIC. The PIC also oversees Boston's employment and training system, serving both the city's residents and employers, and serves as the Regional Employment Board, responsible for coordinating a broad array of workforce development resources.

Participants

PIC programs involve the region's employers and emerging, incumbent, and transitional workforces.

Program Summary

The PIC is involved in three workforce development initiatives:

School-to-Career and Job Programs: In its connecting function, the PIC is a job broker that matches the interests of students with the needs of employers. It also recruits employers to provide summer jobs for young people and has extended some summer jobs through a year-round counterpart to that program entitled The Jobs Collaborative.

In school-to-career activities, the PIC serves a more complex intermediary function. In the early 1990s, it launched the National Academies of Boston and ProTech to respond to the workforce needs of growing service industries. Since 1995, it has also worked with the Boston Public Schools as the intermediary between schools and employers in new career pathway programs operating in nine high schools and five middle schools. The PIC prepares and places students with employers in work-based learning opportunities and works with both parties to ensure the experience is productive.

continued

Boston Private Industry Council *continued*

Program Summary *continued*

Welfare-to-Work: The PIC serves two roles in welfare-to-work initiatives. First, it organizes employers to identify employment opportunities for welfare recipients. Second, it helps employers design education and case management services for new employees, building these services around specific job commitments geared toward retention and career development. The PIC does not provide these services itself; as a broker, it identifies and selects the appropriate providers on behalf of the employers.

Career Centers: Combining convening and brokering roles, the PIC has chartered three career centers in the Boston area to deliver high-quality, reliable services to job seekers and employers. The PIC's Career Center Committee oversees service delivery, provides advice on quality improvement, and solicits customer feedback.

Staffing

Over 50 PIC staff members, including 38 school-based staff, work on school-to-career programs. The Regional Employment Board's staff of five oversees employer organizing and program design for the welfare-to-work programs and the career centers. The latter two projects contract out for direct services.

Funding

The PIC's annual school-to-career budget is $5 million, with funds from the school department, federal and state governments, and private foundations. The $6 million welfare-to-work program is supported by the U.S. Department of Labor. The $5.1 million for the career centers comes from federal and state sources.

Measures of Success/ Outcomes

The PIC tracks three measures of success for school-to-career activities: student work-site learning hours, an annual survey of high school graduates that compares Boston rates of employment or postsecondary entry to national rates, and student outcomes (attendance, performance on standardized tests, drop-out rates, etc.).

Measures of success for the welfare-to-work initiative will include the number of welfare recipients placed in unsubsidized jobs, retention rates in the labor force, and wage increases over time.

Measures of success for the career centers include the number of job seekers placed in a job or an educational setting and retention rates in the labor force. The measure of success among employers will be the amount of repeat business each center solicits.

Partnership for a Smarter Workforce

Mission

The Partnership for a Smarter Workforce (PSW) is a three-year effort to test mechanisms for promoting learning and develop learning systems in small and mid-sized manufacturing firms. It is a project of the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning, the National Association of Manufacturers/Manufacturing Institute and the Corporation for Business, Work and Learning (CBWL).

Highlighted Function

Brokering services to employers

Strategy

PSW tested the use of the relationship between a prime customer and its smaller supplier firms to aggregate and focus training needs and worked with individual firms to establish an organizational assessment process.

Structure/Design

The project partners are implementing PSW at two sites, one in New England and one in the Midwest. This profile focuses on the New England program, which CBWL is managing.

CBWL has taken a two-stage approach to develop interest in training and skills development. The first phase of the project focused on assuring that the firms' and learners' needs would drive project implementation. The second phase is providing training to the suppliers and the prime contractor in a group format, using the network structure to help address aggregate training needs, such as quality or purchasing systems issues.

Participants

Textron Defense Systems, with 1,000 employees at the project site, is the prime customer firm. The 16 supplier firms in the project are located in Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Connecticut.

Program Summary

In the first phase, Textron identified suppliers to approach, with the hope that its interest in training would increase supplier interest in training. Approaching firms through the prime customer did gain the attention of firms, with most responding promptly to the initial outreach.

Next, in the second phase, the CBWL staff offered a method that would link training services to the firm's business needs, produce effective application of learning, and create an ongoing training/learning infrastructure in the firm. This support was viewed as particularly important in small employer firms that did not have full-time training or often even human resource staff.

This phase of the project involved four steps. First, CBWL staff consulted the management of individual firms to develop organizational learning plans. Second, CBWL worked with each firm to establish learning committees comprised of a cross-section of employees for each training program. Third, CBWL

continued

Partnership for a Smarter Workforce *continued*

Program Summary *continued*	helped train members of the learning committees on how to evaluate the products of training vendors, establishing extensive requirements for providers to customize services to provide applied training and be evaluated based on results. Finally, CBWL worked with learning committee members to establish an internal learning infrastructure to continue to evaluate company training needs and training options in the future.
Staffing	Four to five full-time staff members went to sites and helped firms develop plans and learning committees.
Funding	The Defense Diversification Program provided a total of $1.1 million to fund the project at the New England site.
Measures of Success/ Outcomes	Now in its third and final year, PSW has learned lessons about the value of the mechanisms it is testing. It plans to publish and disseminate these lessons in a forthcoming report, with a view toward replicating those strategies that were successful. At the New England site, the delivery of direct services is getting into full swing. The accomplishments to date have resulted from the analytic and participatory process that contributed to building a new learning structure in project firms. As the project continues to deliver service, PSW expects to learn about situation-specific criteria for selecting training methodologies.

Seattle Jobs Initiative

Mission

To achieve livable wage jobs and promote retention and upward mobility for low-income job seekers by supplying regional employers with qualified workers and by working on job and job-related systems improvements.

Highlighted Function

Brokering services to employers

Strategy

Seattle Jobs Initiative (SJI) contracts with industry associations to serve as the workforce intermediary for employers within targeted sectors. It is also a clearinghouse for jobs and a service that links the business sector with nonprofit agencies working with job seekers.

Structure/Design

Three components of the SJI program illustrate how SJI serves as a broker for both employers and job seekers. The Targeted Sectors/Jobs Strategy program assists un- and under-employed residents to obtain jobs in targeted growth industry sectors (health services, precision metalwork, and construction) by identifying current job opportunities, helping employers develop new jobs, and providing employers with the information, training, technology assistance, and other supports needed to improve their competitiveness. Industry-specific job brokers serve as a "one-stop" for employers needing workers.

The Employment Linkage project helps residents access jobs with businesses that benefit from city-led economic development efforts by establishing first-source and voluntary hiring agreements with these businesses as a means to demonstrate "public benefit." SJI is working with city government to identify additional incentives for employers (such as loans, transfer of development rights, zoning considerations, etc.) to hire labor from among target groups through hiring agreements.

Finally, SJI is seeking to create a system of community agencies to act as a decentralized "one-stop" for low income job seekers. SJI contracts with a number of ethnically and geographically based community organizations to provide outreach, recruitment, and a variety of job readiness services to low income job seekers.

Participants

SJI employer customers are those that have entry-level and semi-skilled job opportunities that pay livable wages and provide benefits. Specific sectors targeted in 1997-98 include manufacturing, health care, construction and administrative/office services. SJI job seekers are low-income residents who are over 18, live in the City of Seattle, and are a client of a SJI community service provider.

Business, educational institutions, labor, foundation, nonprofit agencies, and other jurisdictions collaborated to design and fund SJI. Major systems partners include the Washington Department of Social and Health Services, State

continued

Seattle Jobs Initiative *continued*

Participants *continued*	Employment Security Department, Seattle Community College District, Seattle/King County Private Industry Council, Seattle Housing Authority and King County.
Program Summary	The industry-specific job brokers employed by SJI work for employers to identify qualified workers, develop training programs, and help them access tax credits available to businesses who hire residents from the local community. Brokers will also work with employers within the targeted sectors to *provide some direct services, including* identifying and developing training for incumbent workers, developing job ladders, and providing diversity and supervisory training. The brokers refer jobs to the community agencies, and job-seeking residents are screened and referred to available positions. In terms of developing training programs for job seekers, the brokers work with community colleges and apprenticeship programs to develop appropriate training programs specifically designed to meet the workforce needs of particular groups of employers, with business guiding the curriculum development of training efforts. The brokers are also linked functionally with the rest of the City's economic development services so they can help employers connect with financing and other needed assistance.
Staffing	SJI's Operating Unit houses eight community development specialists (including industry-specific job brokers), three administrative personnel, one public relations person, and one manager of operations.
Funding	For the 1997-98 biennium, the Seattle City Council approved the creation of a $6.5 million Families and Jobs Opportunity Fund, out of which it funds the Seattle Jobs Initiative. In addition to the City of Seattle, SJI has other funders, including the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Boeing, Medina Foundation, Microsoft, Northwest Area Foundation, Seattle Foundation, US West, and Wells Fargo Bank.
Measures of Success/ Outcomes	Seattle Jobs Initiative expects to place 1,200 individuals in jobs paying at least $8/hour. Retention targets are 70% for 6 months, 65% for 1 year, and 60% for 2 years.

Macomb Community College
Center for Training and Employer Services

Mission

Macomb Community College's Center for Training and Employer Services (CTES) provides customized education, training, and related services to local firms through the development of partnerships with companies, organizations, and government.

Highlighted Function

Direct services to firms

Strategy

CTES provides customized training in accordance with the needs and specifications of client employers who seek to prepare and upgrade their workforces.

Structure/Design

CTES tailors educational programs and services to area business and industry. It is one of the principle parts of Macomb's Community and Employer Services Unit, which offers non-traditional, often non-credit, programs. The Community and Employer Services Unit provides contract-driven, customized training programs to enhance community and economic development in Macomb County.

Participants

CTES major clients tend to be original equipment manufacturers and their first- and second-tier suppliers.

Program Summary

Originally, Macomb provided customized training activities to individual firms. In 1988, General Motors projected shortages of trained designers and CAD operators, and it initiated a program with the college and engineering service firms to produce high-quality, entry-level technicians and well-trained incumbent workers. Since then, this program, Project Design, has grown into a consortium of 20 firms and over 30 high schools and community colleges. It develops standards and curriculum for auto body design students in the Detroit metropolitan area.

In 1992, in conjunction with the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center, Macomb helped launch the Plastics Industry Resource Network (PIRN). In its first year of operation, PIRN tailored training programs for 26 plastic firms through the college.

The success of PIRN inspired the college and the Michigan Manufacturing Technology Center to establish the Macomb Industrial Network (MIN) to deal with specific problems of small and mid-sized suppliers of goods and service to the auto industry. By 1995, 91 firms took part directly in MIN-sponsored activities that served the needs of pools of employers in particular industry subsectors.

Staffing

CTES has nine full-time employees who write grants and manage projects and over 400 part-time instructors.

Macomb Community College
Center for Training and Employer Services *continued*

Funding

In 1995-96, the CTES generated $2,237,986 from contracts and grants. CTES revenue helps finance activities in other parts of the college.

Measures of Success/ Outcomes

The goal of Macomb's workforce development and economic development activities is to maintain high-wage, high-skill jobs in the community. In 1994-95, CTES provided services that serve this goal to 64 companies and over 10,000 trainees. In the past five years, CTES has tripled the number of trainees in its programs and increased its revenue by 500 percent.

Twin Cities Rise!

Mission

Twin Cities RISE! (TCR!) has two objectives: to enable people to escape poverty and to increase the supply of skilled labor available to local businesses. An experimental, market-driven approach to job training and job retention, it is designed to address concentrated poverty, particularly in communities of color.

Highlighted Function

Direct services to individuals

Strategy

TCR! provides unemployed and underemployed adults, primarily men of color, with work- and life-skills training, job opportunities, comprehensive support services during training, and one-year post-placement coaching.

Structure/Design

TCR! develops participant skills in three key areas. Basic skills are primarily reading, writing, and math and the basics of computers. "Sense of self" skills range from time management to conflict resolution. Occupational skills training is available in word processing, financial services, administrative support, and precision production. Participants typically choose the occupation-specific skills they wish to learn after working with the first two sets of skills.

The program starts with an intensive eight-week program, Foundation Development. Participants' interests and abilities are assessed, and they take classes and labs in basic skills, computers, workplace communication, interpersonal and personal skills, and, if needed, English as a second language. They also begin to meet with a Workskills Coach and occupational experts from local employers and TCR!

Participants focus on an occupational family during Advanced Professional Development, based on a development plan tailored for a career in one of five occupational areas. Throughout this part of the program, participants must hold a part-time job. As their skills develop, TCR! staff help them advance to higher-paying jobs with increased responsibilities. Participants also attend a technical college or a proprietary technical school for occupational development.

At the end of the program, TCR! places the participant in a customer company, and the participant agrees to work for that company for at least one year. During that year, TCR! provides post-placement assessment and support services.

Participants

TCR! focuses on unemployed and underemployed men of color.

Program Summary

TCR!'s program has three major components: classes and support services at TCR!, technical education at local schools, and continuous work-experience through part-time jobs.

Each program participant receives a variety of support services, as well as one-on-one assistance from a Workskills Coach. The coach meets with the participant

continued

Twin Cities Rise! *continued*

Program Summary *continued*

throughout the program and during the first year of job placement. The coach and the participant work together to create a personal development plan based on the individuals' educational, personal, and occupational needs.

TCR! provides participants with financial assistance, transportation, child care, and help from specialists–such as education therapists, psychologists, and chemical dependency counselors–at the company's expense. TCR! works with each participant until he or she finds stable employment at an income of at least $20,000 per year.

Staffing

TCR! employs four full-time Workskills Coaches, each of whom works with 20 participants. The seven other full-time employees include an employer services representative, a program development manager, and supervisory and administrative staff. In addition, there are five part-time instructors.

Funding

TCR! estimates its expenses are up to $20,000 per participant. Its $1.5 million annual budget is funded primarily by foundations. As an experiment, it has grants from several major local and national funders, including McKnight, Joyce, and Cowles foundations, and local community foundations.

TCR! seeks to become financially independent. Employers would pay for the provision of skilled labor. Also, employers could transfer to TCR! a special employer tax refund, approved by the Minnesota legislature.

Measures of Success/ Outcomes

In their first full year at TCR!,

- Participants' incomes increased 28 percent;
- Participants' public subsidies decreased 23 percent; and
- Participants' payment of child support in arrears increased 20 percent.

In addition, by the end of 1997, 90 percent of program participants had jobs; 20 percent had jobs paying $20,000 or more, plus benefits; 40 percent were in "work experiences" leading to a $20,000 job.

Tulsa Industrial Exchange, Inc.

Mission

Industrial Exchange (IndEx), established in 1992 by the Metropolitan Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, has a dual role. First, it provides community-based work experience for welfare recipients, preparing them for low-skill production and assembly jobs. Second, it is a job broker, using its clout in the business community to help place IndEx participants in permanent jobs.

Highlighted Function

Direct services to firms and individuals

Strategy

IndEx uses an "employer driven" approach to determine what jobs are available, what skills they need, and how to develop its training program to provide participants with those skills.

Structure/Design

Participants spend four hours per day in education activities and four hours on IndEx's shop floor, performing light manufacturing and packaging tasks as part of contract work from local firms.

Employers have the option of hiring IndEx trainees for a 30-day out-placement "trial" period. During that time, employers pay IndEx, much as they would a temporary staffing firm. Trainees typically end up in relatively low-skill employment (e.g., the mailroom).

IndEx's 60-day program leads to longer-term placements. This program combines placement at the firm with training in specific occupational areas (electronics and telecommunications).

In both programs, it is understood that the employer will hire the trainee if the trial period is completed satisfactorily.

A 10-member board of directors provides overall policy and management guidance. The board includes eight private-sector executives from companies that do business with IndEx.

Participants

IndEx participants are parents and heads of household in active AFDC/TANF cases. Most are female. They range in age from 18 to 47, and most lack a high school diploma. Almost all participants are people of color, primarily African Americans. IndEx enrolls about 70 welfare recipients at a time.

Program Summary

IndEx is "employer-driven." This is illustrated by two of its central functions: employer recruitment and program development.

To gain the support and participation of employers, IndEx utilizes its ties to the private sector through the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce. Top-level chamber discussions with local companies cover a variety of economic development issues it is addressing, of which IndEx is just one. Companies consider the topic of hiring

continued

Tulsa Industrial Exchange, Inc. *continued*

Program Summary *continued*

welfare recipients as an option within the larger domain of regional economic development. In addition, Chamber staff help with IndEX's outreach to employers.

The IndEX program is also "employer driven" in that participants fulfill "real world" work orders from local firms. When an employer provides work to IndEx, a company representative visits the workshop to teach participants how to assemble the product or operate the machinery, which the company donates to IndEx. In some cases, companies also periodically send staff to IndEx to monitor production. Occasionally, these visitors identify promising participants and offered them full-time employment.

Staffing

Classroom teachers (3 FTEs), office personnel (2 FTEs), counselor (1 FTE), shop foreman (1 FTE), shop manager (1 FTE), director (1 FTE).

Funding

Initially, the Chamber and IndEx established an informal credit system to cover start-up costs, including the leasing of the first facility and the move to a larger facility 16 months later. In addition, IndEx received a series of small grants from local foundations and corporations. It also received a Community Development Block Grant from Tulsa and contract awards from federal jobs programs. However, it generated most of its operating budget through piece-rate contracts negotiated with participating firms.

In 1996, a general support grant of $200,000 from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation allowed IndEx to expand its program. That award, followed by an influx of new funds, increased the 1996 operating budget to $500,000.

Measures of Success/ Outcomes

In an informal survey of companies that had hired IndEx participants, all respondents indicated a positive experience and reported they would hire additional participants as positions became available. Several line managers and others directly involved with IndEx's training programs expressed confidence in the organization's referrals.

Some respondents spoke of IndEx and the Chamber of Commerce interchangeably: "The Chamber has a reputation to protect. Other area nonprofits may not care if people work out well [in placements]." In other words, some employees saw the Chamber of Commerce as a screen, ensuring that participants who went out for interviews and placements were adequately prepared.